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PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1928/01 1590249
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 080249Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4943
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 BAGHDAD 001928

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SECSTATE FOR NEA/I
DOD FOR OSD/PA
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: TRANSCRIPT OF PM MALIKI PRESS CONFERENCE

(U) The following is a transcript of Prime Minister Nuri al-Malikis press conference in Baghdad on June 6, 2006.

Opening Statement

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT.

"In harmony with the Government program, which we announced the day the Council of Representatives granted us a vote of confidence;

Out of our commitment to the principle of national reconciliation, which we believe will save Iraq from the current crisis, given that with national reconciliation we will be able to reaffirm national unity and face challenges and attempts at dragging the country toward strife, violence, and internal differences;

In order to create a positive climate and circumstances to effect this reconciliation, which requires efforts, cooperation, and harmony in views, concepts, and stands because of the circumstances on which we might wager for the success of our experiment or the initiative whose details will be fully announced over the next two days;

In order to save many of our sons who have been embroiled in the culture of violence and incitement and who adopted hostile attitudes that led to their imprisonment, and give them the necessary opportunity to reconsider their stands and abandon the line that they have adopted and which led among other things to destruction and the ruination of the country; and given that they are our sons and we are eager to make them good citizens and factors of reconstruction and basic elements in the process of building new Iraq on the ruins of dictatorship;

In order that the sectarian and racist ideas might not take root in this country and so that we might replace them with tolerance, dialogue, and the words and the ideas that might bring progress, peace, love, and amity among the sons of this country;

Because we are all aware of the need for the construction of this country, which dictatorship has destroyed and which continues to suffer from its too

many wounds;

Because no single group, denomination, community or sect can shoulder this responsibility alone, and because restoring Iraq's pride, sovereignty, and dignity cannot be realized unless through the participation of all, and that any harm done to any component of these people will reflect on the efficiency of the reconstruction process;

And based on the above considerations and on the basis of fundamental steps to achieve national reconciliation and realize the principle of national dialogue, which will start soon, God willing, and be run by a central committee and local committees in the governorates, which will work in accordance with a timetable and agreed-upon mechanisms and hold extensive cultural and media events, the first step, which we deem necessary and view as a positive message of love, is to release more than 2,000 detainees who have been detained without conclusive evidence against them, who are willing to reconsider their positions, or who have been arrested by mistake. We will release 2,500 detainees in batches within the next few days.

The first batch of 500 prisoners will be released tomorrow. They will be released and sent back to their families. We wish them happiness and we congratulate their families on the release of their sons. We hope that our sons, who will be released tomorrow or after that, will be committed to their promises and the pledges that they have signed, and that they will not oppose the political process by violence. We do not have any objection to opposition by words and expression and it is the right of all Iraqis to be in

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the opposition. However, this should be an opposition through dialogue, a civilized opposition that does not resort to violence and bloodletting. We welcome every voice in the opposition because we consider it a factor of strength to the political process. It does not harm it. We do not want a society that says yes but we want a society that says yes after careful examination, a society that gives its viewpoint.

I consider this a good beginning, God willing, to prepare the elements of national reconciliation and I greatly hope that the families of the prisoners, the organizations to which they belong, and all those who care for the prisoners will back this development and encourage it so as to create an appropriate climate for the culture of dialogue and cancel the culture of violence, which has brought many disasters on the country. Thank you very much."

Questions and Answers

Q - What is your estimation of the security situation? Will the release of the detainees make the reconciliation conference successful?

A - The government is taking some steps to support the reconciliation conference. One of these steps is to release the detainees, reviewing their cases and making sure that human rights are applied. Terrorists increased their attacks in an attempt to restrict the government and to make it fail, but they won't succeed because the government is supported by all components of Iraqi society.

Q - MSA had put some preconditions to participate in the reconciliation conference. Is the release of detainees a response to some of their preconditions?

A - The attendance and participation isn't in one conference but it will be in a series of conferences with the participation of politicians, religious men and civil society institutions. Anyone who wants reconciliation with himself, people and others shouldn't put preconditions; one listens, talks and negotiates, because negotiation is the master of reconciliation. We can't do reconciliation through TVs, satellite channels and complications.

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Q - We heard about military operations to be launched in Anbar and Baquba. Is the release of detainees related with the start of these operations?

A - In order to deal with the security issue, we should use power against terrorists. Releases, security, reconstruction, all are ongoing processes and every track shouldn't stop in favor for another track. We will put a date for Baghdad security plan to start and another security plan for Diyala province, which is intended to be stronghold for terrorists to launch their operations. We will increase our security and fighting capabilities to confront the challenges. The reconciliation conference will be put into effect.

Q - Are the 2500 detainees to be released from Iraqi or MNF prisons?

A - The decision included detainees in Iraqi and MNF prisons. A committee was formed to review all the detainee cases in Iraqi prisons and to improve their conditions.

Q - Why is there a delay in announcing the names of ministers of Defense, Interior and National Security. Are new names the cause of the delay?

A - No, the names submitted are the same and the delay is because the attendants didn't reach the number required to hold the session.

Q - The government demanded files of the Haditha in Ishaqi incidents. What is happening regarding the investigations?

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A - We demanded the files of these cases and are waiting for them and we will follow up. The government also formed a committee to probe these files. The government condemned the killing of innocent people and it will demand punishment to those who commit such killing.

Q - The situation in Basra is still deteriorating. What measures are being taken there?

A - Forces there are still in ongoing alertness. The forces had controlled the assassinations and random killing. Explosions occurred to target the reform process there. The government is discussing the issue with the concerned parties there to take full control. The government is trying to improve services in Basra because one of the reasons of the deterioration of the security situation there is unemployment. Security forces are intensifying their work there.

Q - Will the PM as an executive authority call upon political blocs to support the reconciliation?

A - All the political powers, the government, parliament, civil society institutions, men and women,

should take responsibility for reconciliation.

Q - Regarding security and stability, what has the government done, especially after the massacres in al-Audhaim or in Salehiya?

A - The security situation is very complex. We offered condolences to the martyrs families. This is terror. There are internal and external interventions. We have a short-term plan to confront terror and a long-term plan, how to impose security in the upcoming years to let reconstruction begin. The government can't take responsibility for all of this; the people of the country should help.

Q - When will the government leave the Green Zone?

A - The security forces, police, army, the ministries, all are outside the green Zone. If you mean the headquarters of the government, it was there in its present location before the Green Zone was defined.

Q - Has not selecting ministers of Interior, Defense and National Security delayed implementation of the security plan?

A - Its right that these posts are very important but this is not the reason of the delay. It was that the attendants didn't reach the number required to hold a session. Also, we need to select independent ministers to take this responsibility in order not to let there be any suspicion regarding their performance.

Q - When will terror's fight law put into effect? What about Takfiris and Saddamists?

A - Good point to mention that those who were released aren't terrorists or involved in Iraqis bloodshed. One of the articles of the National Reconciliation initiative is to put into effect the terror's fight law. The government completed the security plan and we will see the results of this plan in the near future.

Q - We heard of the formation of a special force to protect Baghdad. How is that true?

A - Yes, this force was formed and they have put a security plan together to protect Baghdad. You will see the results of this plan in the near future.

Q - Were there recommendations from the Cairo conference to acknowledge the resistance and to alleviate Debaathification law?

A - There is no resistance since a legitimate government has been established, elected by the

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people. Debaathification is a constitutional issue. It was discussed that all independent committees including the Debaathification committee will be reviewed to be a method of reform. There are many Baathists who want to get rid of this burden and interact with society again.

Q - Are there certain areas in Baghdad like Dura, Biya and Al Amel that the security forces don't control?

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A - The security plan will secure central Baghdad as well as its perimeter.

Q - Have the parties who will participate in the National Reconciliation Conference been identified?

A - No, the government didnt name any party to participate in the conference. Everyone who isn't involved in bloodshed, killing or importing sectarian thinking is welcomed.

END TRANSCRIPT.

KHALILZAD